

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: July 5, 2006
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Sleeping Driver Strikes Trooper

At 1:20am this morning, a trooper was parked in the gore point on northbound I-5 to 85th. The trooper was waiting in response to a 911 call concerning a possible drunk driver traveling northbound on I-5 from the downtown Seattle area. A 2000 Chevy Caviler traveling northbound struck the trooper's vehicle in the rear. The driver of the Caviler was asleep prior to hitting the patrol car. The Caviler was not the prior dispatched drunk driver.

The trooper and driver of the Caviler sustained minor injuries.

The trooper was commissioned in July 2001 and is assigned to District 2, King County.

The collision is still under investigation and no criminal charges are pending at this point.

Background:

Collectively, troopers in King County park on the shoulders more than 10,000 times per month. Troopers park on the shoulder to assist disabled motorists, contact violators, investigate collisions, arrest drunk drivers and watch for HOV violators. The shoulder and gore points are supposed to be safe places where troopers can park and do their job. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 143 officers died in the United States from being struck by a vehicle (1995-2004). Eight Troopers' patrol cars have been struck while parked on the shoulder resulting in four troopers sustaining injuries in King County since February 2005.

February 20, 2005-Trooper parked on shoulder eastbound I-90 at High Point clearing an earlier collision struck by Jeep Cherokee. The trooper was injured.

July 31, 2005- Trooper parked on the shoulder checking on an abandoned vehicle northbound SR 167 just south of 277th was struck from behind by suspected DUI. The trooper was injured.

August 9, 2005-Trooper parked on the left shoulder of southbound I-405 just south of NE 6th. Eddie Bennett, driving while impaired by drugs, rear ends the trooper's patrol car. The trooper was injured. Bennett pleads guilty to DUI and Vehicular Assault and is sentenced to 6 months.

November 5, 2005, 1:02am- Two troopers parked on the shoulder northbound I-5 at Michigan working a collision. Suspected DUI strikes left rear of one patrol car pushing it into the other. Both troopers were outside of their vehicles and were not injured.

May 19, 2006, 2:21am- Two troopers in separate patrol cars were parked on the shoulder, with emergency lights activated, eastbound SR 520 at the old Toll Plaza. They had just cleared a stop and were both outside of their vehicles. A black, 2004 Toyota Camry traveling eastbound left the roadway and struck both patrol cars. The troopers were not injured, but their vehicles were badly damaged. The Camry failed to stop after crashing into the patrol cars and fled the scene exiting to 84th. Officers from Clyde Hill Police Department observed the running vehicle and placed the driver in custody on the 2700 block of 85 NE. The driver was booked into the King County Jail for Hit and Run and DUI.

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